

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of September 27, 2016**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Selectmen Lynn Doney (absent), Nathan Freeman (absent), Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Highway Foreman Trent Tucker, Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Gail Aloisio (Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission), Steve Davis, and Gary Davis.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Sally Davidson from the Recreation Committee will be added to "Public Participation (Scheduled)" for a report on the blue spruce tree on the Town Common.
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

- a. **Sally Davidson, Recreation Committee: Removal and Replacement of Blue Spruce Tree.** Ms. Davidson consulted Tree Warden Russ Barrett and another tree expert regarding the large spruce tree on the west side of the Common that is decorated for Christmas. Both agreed the tree is dying and has about three (3) years of life left. Diane McKain (McKain Farm) will donate a smaller replacement tree and Ms. Davidson has obtained an estimate from Treeworks to transplant this tree for \$265 per hour for a minimum of four (4) hours work. Treeworks also will waive thirty percent (30%) of the total bill. The new tree will be placed a little southward of the current tree for better access to utilities, etc. Selectman Gadbois asked if existing infrastructure would be impacted by the old tree's removal and the installation of the new one. Manager Schulz said Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi has been apprised of the plans and found no problems. Selectman Gadbois asked if any of the business owners located around the Common have made any objections. Ms. Davidson said she has heard none. In fact, the Northfield Savings Bank has been very enthusiastic and plans to donate new Christmas decorations for the new tree and the surrounding area. Selectman Goslant has spoken to several people and they agree with him the Common now is overgrown with trees and the dying spruce tree is too large for proper holiday decoration. Manager Schulz stated since there appears to be no objection from the Select Board, the work will be done as soon as possible. Selectman Gadbois felt if the Tree Warden has confirmed the spruce tree is dying, it should be removed. He also noted the estimate from Treeworks does not include removal of the old tree. Highway Foreman Trent Tucker said he has obtained a \$600 quote to remove the tree. The Highway Department crew will grind down the stump later. Chair Maxwell asked Manager Schulz to coordinate with Ms. Davidson and Mr. Tucker on project logistics. He also thanked Ms. Davidson for working on this project.
- b. **Gail Aloisio, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission: Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.** Ms. Aloisio has been working with Manager Schulz, various municipal department heads (i.e., Highway, Ambulance, Fire, and Utilities), and the Planning Commission on updating Northfield's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was last revised in 2011. She explained hazard mitigation plans focus on minimizing as far as possible the local impact of natural disasters through long-term planning. Ms. Aloisio added having an up-to-date approved plan keeps the municipality eligible for grant funds and also increases the amount of post-disaster funds available from FEMA and other sources. The revised plan has been in development since May and was made available for public comment at the "Night on the Green" event held on July 19, 2016.

Ms. Aloisio distributed to the Select Board members an updated draft plan that incorporated some of the initial feedback. She would like them to review the document and forward any suggestions to her and/or Manager Schulz. The document also will be made available for further public comment with copies available in the Municipal Building and online. The public comment period will end Thursday, October 20, 2016, after which feedback will be evaluated and (perhaps) incorporated into the next draft. That next draft will be presented to the Select Board for its perusal and consent before it is submitted to FEMA for review. Any suggestions from FEMA would be included in the final version the Select Board would be asked to formally approve.

Selectman Goslant asked if the major areas of concern were those hit hardest by Tropical Storm Irene. Ms. Aloisio confirmed flooding events remain the major local concern. This was followed by severe winter weather, which would include ice storms, resulting power outages, etc. Chair Maxwell asked what could be done to address the major concerns. Ms. Aloisio said although flooding remains a threat, some action already has been taken to flag areas with drainage problems and the Highway Department has targeted some of the worst for action. Structures facing serious flooding threats would be listed and long-term plans developed to lessen the risks. Chair Maxwell thanked Ms. Aloisio for her report and encouraged the other Select Board members as well as the general public to review the latest draft plan and provide feedback before the deadline.

V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. **Highway Foreman Trent Tucker.** Mr. Tucker reported the Highway Department crew has been working hard to get all its summer work done while possible. This includes ditching, grading, roadside mowing, etc. Selectman Goslant asked Mr. Tucker if he was pleased with the amount of work done. Mr. Tucker replied he wished summer lasted longer but his crew did accomplish quite a lot in the limited amount of time. Selectman Goslant asked if the Highway Department crew was still down one employee. Manager Schulz said he expected the vacancy to be filled soon. Selectman Goslant asked when Limlaw Pulpwood & Chipping would be returning to perform additional roadside tree clearance. Mr. Tucker said they would be back this Thursday or Friday to deal with problem areas on Winch Hill Road and Bull Run Road. Chair Maxwell felt the overgrown brush on Winch Hill Road definitely needs to be addressed. Selectman Goslant would like a Highway Committee meeting scheduled as soon as possible to discuss winter road maintenance and other matters. Chair Maxwell asked about the sidewalk situation. Mr. Tucker said some sections were in pretty rough shape. He felt there was a need for a long-term plan to deal with the worst areas. Chair Maxwell agreed but also believed some areas could benefit from basic maintenance, such as weeding, dirt removal, etc. Selectman Goslant asked about the status of the Union Brook Road paving project. Mr. Tucker said his crew installed two (2) new culverts to address drainage issues before the paving is done. Pike Industries should be here by mid-October to put a shim coat on the worst parts of the road. Ms. Davidson has seen signage about roadwork on Vermont Route 12A and asked what that would entail. Mr. Tucker said VTrans had contracted with Pike Industries to do some work on the state highway next month, which would include ledge removal, drainage improvements, new guardrails, pavement markings, some repaving, etc. Selectman Goslant noted the last time VTrans worked on the road, heavy equipment traversed Lovers Lane for access and tore it up pretty bad. Chair Maxwell would like to be pro-active on this and asked Mr. Tucker to contact VTrans about this. He then thanked Mr. Tucker for his report and good work.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **August 30, 2016 (Board Retreat).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. **September 13, 2016 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #07-17.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #07-17 in the amount of \$146,566.34. Selectman Gadbois asked about bills for work on Holland Place. Manager Schulz said as part of the stormwater mitigation project behind the American Legion, the municipality paid to have the parking lot there repaved. Although grant money paid for the bulk of this project and most of the local match amount was fulfilled through in-kind services, this particular expense had to be paid for by the municipality. Selectman Gadbois asked about a \$5600 purchase of plant mix for the Fire Station parking area. Manager Schulz confirmed this was planned work and had been budgeted. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #07-17A.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #07-17A in the amount of \$252,940.00. Manager Schulz said for many years, the Northfield Electric Department (NED) has been purchasing Transco units when they are offered. This purchase helps NED by providing healthy investment returns that are used to finance infrastructure maintenance while also reducing power transmission costs (since Transco owns the transmission lines). This purchase was in the NED budget. Chair Maxwell asked if this was the exact amount budgeted. Manager Schulz said a higher amount had been budgeted but fewer units were available for purchase than had been anticipated. Selectman Goslant noted such profitable investments help keep NED rates among the lowest in the state. He added the NED has money on hand to purchase smart meters but the Commissioners don't see any cost benefits at this time. Selectman Gadbois asked about the possibility of NED investing in solar energy. Manager Schulz said the Electric Utility Commission has been looking at siting a solar farm on Cheney Hill Farm. There also have been discussions of installing solar panels on municipal buildings, including the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). **Motion passed 3-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through September 11, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$83,932.08. Selectman Gadbois asked why the Highway Department had \$646 in overtime expenses for this timeframe. Manager Schulz believed most were related to helping with the Labor Day Weekend Festivities on the Common (setup and breakdown) as well as fixing damage done by a microburst storm that occurred over the weekend. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Slate Avenue Drainage Project.** Manager Schulz said the Select Board has held recent discussions regarding repaving Slate Avenue, which is in poor condition, and the stormwater drainage problems that need to be resolved first. The intent would be to direct the street's stormwater towards the drain near the Municipal Building and from there to new Holland Place culverts. This would keep stormwater from reaching the WWTF while satisfying new state regulations. Mr. Tucker feels the Highway Department can perform most of the work and Manager Schulz obtained an engineering design quote from the Dufresne Group. Chair Maxwell noted the \$3600 quote and asked from where the funding would come. Manager Schulz said there were surplus funds from the previous fiscal year that could be used. Selectman Goslant asked when construction would begin. Manager Schulz said it was planned for late spring/early summer 2017.

Selectman Goslant suggested some sidewalk repairs could be done when new waterlines are installed. Manager Schulz said that the engineering study would determine total project costs and whether the Highway Department would be able to do the work or an outside contractor should be brought in. The Select Board also will need to decide whether to budget the project cost or seek bonding authority. Selectman Goslant would like the Highway Department to focus on road maintenance and instead hire an experienced contractor to perform the construction phase. Selectman Gadbois would like to postpone any action on this until the previous year surplus amount has been determined. Chair Maxwell agreed with this.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Holland Place Parking Lot.** Since the stormwater project was completed several weeks ago, Selectman Goslant asked when the parking lot would be re-stripped. Manager Schulz said CVRPC indicated it was to have been done last week but the paving contractor had been delayed by another project. He added that since CVRPC is paying for this work, the municipality has little leverage over getting it done.
- b. **Autumn Leaves Composting.** Selectman Goslant said since autumn began last week, trees are shedding their leaves faster each day. He asked if there was anywhere residents could take them. Manager Schulz said there is a container at the Recycling Center where they could be deposited. There used to be a municipal property where residents could bring their leaves but certain individuals began dumping their household trash there so it had to be closed down. Chair Maxwell felt the municipality needs to develop a plan for a public composting location. Selectman Goslant suggested volunteer workers kept on site could prevent illegal dumping, etc.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Brown Public Library (BPL) Roof Repairs.** Chair Maxwell saw in Manager Schulz's written report that he is working to have temporary BPL roof fixes in place before winter sets in. Manager Schulz confirmed Burrell Roofing has done a couple patching jobs already. He also is working with Lajeunesse Construction to do some internal repairs to address the leaking problems. Chair Maxwell would like bid specifications developed for replacing the roof as a long-term solution. There also needs to be some discussion of how to pay for this. Manager Schulz will start work on this right away.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of October 11, 2016.